United Nations A/58/837–S/2004/465

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
8 June 2004

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session
Agenda items 37 and 156

Security Council
Fifty-ninth year

The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Identical letters dated 8 June 2004 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I wish to draw your attention to the latest violations of the Blue Line from Lebanese territory.

Yesterday morning, 7 June 2004, six 107-mm missiles were fired from Lebanese territory at an Israeli naval vessel patrolling in Israeli territorial waters. Four of the rockets hit Israeli territory, south of the Israeli-Lebanese border, just meters from the Israeli town of Rosh Hanikra. The rockets also gravely endangered the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel stationed in the area. Israeli security forces identified the source of the rocket fire as Ahmed Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Damascus-based Palestinian terrorist organization operating in southern Lebanon. Israeli aircraft responded to these attacks by measured defensive action, in accordance with its right and duty of self-defense, against a PFLP terrorist base located near Beirut, which is used as a platform for terrorist activity in Lebanon. No injuries resulted from this defensive measure.

This afternoon, 8 June 2004, Hizbullah terrorists perpetrated a heavy mortar attack from Lebanon across the Blue Line, wounding an Israeli soldier in the Har Dov region. Approximately 20 rockets and mortar shells were fired at three Israeli positions in the northern Galilee. The bombardment lasted more than two hours.

These incidents are yet the latest in a series of willful attacks carried out against Israel by terrorist organizations like the PFLP and Hizbullah, which operate against Israel freely from Lebanese jurisdiction, and with Syrian and Iranian sponsorship.

Since Israel's complete withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, in full and confirmed compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), tens of Israelis have been killed or wounded in terrorist attacks emanating from Lebanese territory.

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In this time, terrorists operating in Lebanon have fired countless explosive devices across the Blue Line, terrorizing civilian communities along the Northern border. Israeli security forces have also succeeded in thwarting 14 attempted infiltrations into Israel from Lebanese territory.

These acts of aggression were enabled by the complicity of the Government of Lebanon, and with the support of the Syrian and Iranian regimes that have long sponsored, trained and financed these terrorist groups. Such actions represent a direct negation of obligations under international law and the provisions of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 1310 (2000), 1337 (2001) and 1373 (2001). The failure of the Government of Lebanon to restore peace and security, ensure the return of its effective authority and prevent cross-border attacks from its territory in grave violation of these obligations is the direct cause of instability in the area and of the necessity for Israel to take measures in self-defense.

In recent months, the Lebanese representative has circulated numerous letters which manipulate the facts and depict Israeli actions along the Israeli-Lebanese border as provocative rather than defensive, while ignoring the egregious acts of terrorism and ongoing Lebanese violations which necessitated them. It is therefore important to note that the quantity of such letters has no bearing on their accuracy.

The dangerous situation in South Lebanon continues to be the direct result of illegal attacks perpetrated by terrorist organizations across the Blue Line and necessitates immediate action by the governments of Lebanon and Syria to fulfill their international responsibilities and end their support for terrorism. Lebanon, as well as other terrorist-sponsoring regimes in the region, are not absolved of their legal obligations to fight terrorism, like any other state, as part of the global campaign against international terrorism. Israel once again calls on the international community to expect nothing less than full compliance.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 156 and 37. I am also submitting an identical letter to the President of the Security Council for circulation.

(*Signed*) Ambassador Arye **Mekel**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.